



# Chambers's Journal

## SIXTH SERIES.

### THE STORY OF A BURNS FIND.

By the Author of *The Book-hunter in London*.



COMPARATIVELY recent article in *Chambers's Journal* on 'The Providence of Book-hunters' has induced me to put on paper one of the most singular bits of luck which ever came in the way of either bookseller or collector. The story dates back some years; but as it is now recorded for the first time it is none the less fresh.

All the world knows that chief amongst Burns's friends during the early portion of his residence at Dumfries were Mr and Mrs Riddell. Those who will turn to the second edition (1813) of Cromek's *Reliques of Robert Burns*, page 188, will find this paragraph: 'The chief part of the following remarks on Scottish Songs and Ballads exists in the handwriting of Robert Burns, in an interleaved copy, in four volumes 8vo, of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*. They were written by the Poet for Capt. Riddell of Glenriddell, whose autograph the volumes bear. These valuable volumes were left by Mrs Riddell to her niece, Miss Eliza Bayley (whose autograph the volumes also bear), of Manchester, by whose kindness the editor is enabled to give to the Public transcripts of this amusing and miscellaneous collection.'

The history, therefore, of *The Scots Musical Museum*, interleaved, and with upwards of one hundred and forty interesting notes in the handwriting of the poet Robert Burns, is clear and distinct up to the time of Cromek's edition of 1813. For over half-a-century nothing more apparently was heard of these 'reliques.' Miss Bayley died in due course, and bequeathed them to a friend, at whose death they were again inherited by a lady, who, knowing nothing whatever of their value and interest, called in a well-known second-hand bookseller, Mr John Salkeld, then of Orange Street, Red Lion Square (but now of Clapham Road), London. These volumes, along with an autograph presentation copy of Burns's *Poems* (Edinburgh, 1793) and much other miscellaneous

matter, were offered to Mr Salkeld at a small figure, and, at that price, cleared without more than a mere passing examination. Previous to this, a quantity of manuscripts, pamphlets, and so forth, inherited from the same source, had been destroyed, and the astonishing fact is that the *Musical Museum* did not share the same fate.

The books were duly conveyed to Orange Street, and some days elapsed before they were examined for catalogue purposes. In the meantime a very smart bookseller called, and, in grubbing about, picked up the *Musical Museum*. He glanced over it first casually, and then carefully, and demanded: 'How much do you want for this?' 'Five pounds,' was the random answer of the owner, who loved not the rival tradesman. 'I will give you three pounds,' was the immediate offer, which Mr Salkeld promptly refused. The smart bookseller left the shop, only to return the following day with a five-pound note and a demand for the books. It was too late; for the owner's curiosity had been excited, and a very brief examination showed him the extraordinary interest of his purchase. The price suddenly went up to a hundred and ten guineas. The smart man left without the books, but with the firm conviction, which he did not hesitate to express, that the other man was mad.

In the next Salkeld catalogue, No. 51, these Burns 'reliques' make a good show, the description occupying two pages, and include a number of articles which had no connection with the poet, but only with his friends the Riddells. The catalogues were duly posted, the country ones first, and the town ones a day later, as is the custom. Within forty-eight hours there came up to London a well-known provincial bookseller, who demanded the little collection for ready cash at ninety pounds. This offer was refused, and the disappointed bibliopole left the shop with his money in his pocket, and perhaps, like the former bookseller, with the conviction in his soul that the London man was stark, staring mad.

During the bartering, an old customer, who had missed the new catalogue, had been quietly 'browsing' amongst the books in the shop; and when the provincial gentleman left, he asked permission to see the collection. The request was of course immediately granted, to be followed almost as quickly by the purchase and the conveyance of the collection away in a cab to his residence in Barnsbury, where it now is.

Of course, the provincial bookseller again turned up a few hours later, prepared to give the full catalogue price; but I will mercifully draw a veil over his consternation when he discovered that the collection had not only been sold, but actually removed. The 'moral' of this little story is fairly obvious; for here were two exceptionally smart booksellers who overreached themselves, each in turn offering what both must have known was an inadequate amount for what Allan Cunningham truly describes as 'precious volumes.'

*The Scots Musical Museum*, 'humbly dedicated to the Catch Club, instituted at Edinburgh, June 1771, by James Johnson,' is, it need hardly be said, the gem of the collection, which altogether comprises fourteen volumes. The copy of the *Poems* already mentioned is also unique in its way, and the absence of Benger's portrait is more than compensated for by the presence of the following characteristic note in Burns's auto-

graph: 'When you and I, my dear sir, have passed that bourne whence no traveller returns, should these volumes survive us, I wish the future Reader of this Page to be informed that they were the pledge of a Friendship, ardent and grateful on my part as it was kind and generous on yours—That Enjoyment may mark your days and Pleasure number your years, is the earnest prayer of, my dr. sir, your much indebted Friend, THE AUTHOR.' The letter is not dated; and it is curious to note in this connection that when a short time before his death (which occurred on July 21, 1796), the poet went to Brow, a seaside village on the Solway, where Mrs Riddell was then residing in ill-health, his greeting was, 'Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?'

The other volumes in this collection comprise *An Album for 1791*, selected for Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, by his friends at Manchester, in MS.; Allan Ramsay's *Poems* (1761), with the signatures of Robert Riddell and Eliza Bayley; Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791); Cordiner's *Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Scotland* (1780); a volume of miscellanies, including articles written by Robert Riddell; and a folio volume of music, partly written and partly printed—altogether as choice a collection as a book-hunter could hope to meet with even in his wildest dreams!

## JOHN BURNET OF BARNES.

### CHAPTER XV.—THE FIRST MONDAY OF MARCH.



ICOL awakened me before dawn, and I made haste to get ready. I looked to see that my sword was in fit condition, for it was a stout cut-and-thrust blade of the kind which speedily takes the rust. Then, having taken a draught of strong ale to brace my nerves for the encounter, I left the house and set off with my servant for the college gardens.

Now, from the college gardens there stretches down to the great canal a most beautiful pleasure, all set with flower-beds and fountains. Beyond this, again, is a more rugged land, a grove with great patches of grass in it, and here it was that gentlemen of the Scots regiment were wont to settle their differences.

I cannot tell how I felt as I walked through the cool morning air among the young herbs and trees, which still bore the dew upon them. It minded me so keenly of the mornings at home in Tweeddale, when I was used to rise before daylight and go far up Tweed with my rod, and bring back, if my luck were good, great baskets of trout. Now I was bound on a different errand.

It was even possible that I might see my own land no more. But this thought I dismissed as unworthy of one who would be thought a cavalier.

In time we came to the spot which the others had fixed on. There I found my man already waiting me; my cousin stripped to his shirt and small-clothes, with his blade glimmering as he felt its edge; his companions muffled up in heavy cloaks and keeping guard over Gilbert's stripped garments. They greeted me shortly as I came up; so without more ado I took off my coat and vest, and gave them into my servant's keeping. Then, going up to my opponent, I took his hand.

'Let there be no malice between us, Gilbert,' said I. 'I was rash maybe, but I am here to give account of my rashness.'

'So be it, cousin,' he said, as he took my hand coldly.

We both stepped back a pace and crossed swords, and in a trice we had fallen to.

My first thought, and I am not ashamed to confess it, when I felt my steel meet the steel of my foe, was one of arrant and tumultuous fear.

I had never before crossed swords with any one in deadly hatred; and in my case the thing was the harder, for the feeling against my cousin was not so violent a passion as to make me heedless of aught else. But now a feeling which I had not reckoned with came to oppress me—the fear of death. Had my wits been more about me I might have reflected that my cousin was too good a swordsman to kill me and lay himself open to many penalties. But my mind was in such a confusion that I could think of naught but an overwhelming danger.

Howbeit in a little this fit passed, and once more I was myself. Gilbert, for what reason I know not, fenced swiftly and violently. Blow came upon blow till I scarce could keep my breath. I fell at once upon the defensive, and hazarded never a cut, but set all my powers to preserving my skin. And in truth this was no easy task, for he had acquired a villainous trick of passing suddenly from the leg-cut to the head-stroke, so that more than once I came not up to guard in time and had his sword almost among my hair. I could not guess what he meant by this strategy, for I had ever believed that a man who began in a hot-fit ended in a languor. He sought, I doubt not, to speedily put an end to the encounter by putting forth his greater strength, hoping to beat down my guard or bewilder me with the multiplicity of his flourishes.

Now, this conduct of my opponent had an effect the very counter of what he proposed. I became completely at my ease; indeed I swear I never felt more cool in my life. This has ever been the way with me, for I have always been at my best in the extremest perils. Oftentimes, when things went very sore with me, I was at a loss and saw no way of escape; but let them get a little worse and I was ready to meet them. So now I was on the watch to frustrate every movement; and since no man can fight rapidly and fight well, I kept him at bay till he deemed it prudent to give up this method.

But now, when he came down to slow, skilful fence, I found my real danger. We were well-matched, although I was something lighter, he somewhat stronger in the arm and firmer in the body; but taking us all in all we were as nearly equal a pair as might be. And now there was an utter silence; even the birds on the trees seemed to have ceased. The others no longer talked. The sharp clatter and ring of the swords had gone, and in its place was a deadly *swish-swish*, which every man who has heard it dreads, for it means that each stroke grazes the vitals. I would have given much in that hour for another inch to my arm. I put forth all my skill of fence. All that I had learned from Tam Todd, all that I had found out by my own wits, was present to me; but, try as I would, and I warrant you I tried my utmost, I could not overreach my opponent.

Yet I fenced steadily, and, if I made no progress, I did not yield my ground.

With Gilbert the case was otherwise. His play was the most brilliant I had ever seen, full of fantastic feints and flourishes such as is the French fashion. But I could not think that a man could last for ever in this style, since for one stroke of my arm there were two of his, and much leaping from place to place. But beyond doubt he pressed me close. Again and again I felt his steel slipping under my guard, and it was only by a violent parry that I escaped. One stroke had cut open my sleeve and grazed my arm, but beyond this no one of us had suffered hurt.

But soon a thing which I had scarcely foreseen began to daunt me. I was placed facing the east, and the rising sun began to catch my eyes. The ground was my own choosing, so my ill-luck was my own and no fault of Gilbert's. But it soon began to interfere heavily with my play. I could only stand on guard. I dared not risk a bold stroke, lest, my eyes being dazzled by the light, I should miscalculate the distance. I own I began to feel a spasm of fear. More than one of my opponent's strokes came within perilous nearness. The ground, too, was not firm, and my foot slid once and again when I tried to advance. To add to it all, there was Gilbert's face above the point of the swords, cold, scornful, and triumphant. I began to feel incredibly weak about the small of the back; and I suppose my arm must have wavered, for in guarding a shoulder-cut I dropped my point, and my enemy's blade scratched my left arm just above the elbow. I staggered back with the shock of the blow, and my cousin had a moment's breathing-space. I was so obviously the loser in the game that Gilbert grew merry at my expense.

'Well, John,' he cried, 'does't hurt thee? My arm is somewhat rougher than Marjory's.'

There seems little enough in the words, yet I cannot tell how that taunt angered me. In the mouth of another I had not minded it, but I had a way of growing hot whenever I thought of my cousin and my lady in the same minute of time. It called to my mind a flood of bitter memories. In this encounter, at any rate, it was the saving of me. Once more I was myself, and now I had that overmastering passionate hate which I lacked before. When I crossed swords again I felt no doubt of the issue, and desired only to hasten it. He, on his part, must have seen something in my eyes which he did not like, for he ceased his flourishes and fell on defence.

Then it was that the real combat of the day commenced. Before it had been little more than a trial of skill, now it was a deadly and determined battle. In my state of mind I would have killed my foe with a light heart, however much I might have sorrowed for it after. And now he began to see the folly of his conduct in the fore-

part of the fight. I was still fresh and stout of arm; he was a little weary and his self-confidence a little gone.

'By Heaven, Gilbert, you will eat your words,' I cried, and had at him with might and main.

I fenced as I had never fenced before; not rashly, but persistently, fiercely, cunningly. Every attempt of his I met and foiled. Again and again I was within an ace of putting an end to the thing but for some trifling obstacle which hindered me. He now fought sullenly, with fear in his eyes, for he knew not what I purposed concerning him. I warrant he rued his taunt a hundred times in these brief minutes.

At last my opportunity came. He made a desperate lunge forward, swung half-round, and exposed his right arm. I thrust skilfully and true. Straight through cloth and skin went my blade, and almost ere I knew I had spitted him clean through the arm just above the elbow. The sword dropped from his helpless hand.

I had put forth too much strength; for, as he stumbled back with the shock of the wound, I could not check my course, but staggered heavily against him, and together we rolled on the ground.

In a second I was on my feet and had drawn out my weapon. With lowered point I awaited his rising, for he was now powerless to continue the combat.

'Well,' said I, 'have you had satisfaction?'

He rose to his feet with an ugly smile. 'Sufficient for the present, cousin John,' said he. 'I own you have got the better of me this time. —Hi, Stephen, will you lend me a kerchief to bind this cursed wound?'

One of his companions came up and saw to his wants. I made to go away, for there was no further need of my presence, but my cousin called me back.

'Farewell, John,' he said. 'Let us not part in anger, as before. Parting in anger, they say, means meeting in friendship. And, 'faith, I would rather part from you in all love and meet you next in wrath.'

'Farewell,' I said carelessly as I departed, though I was amazed to hear a man with a pierced arm speak so lightly; courage was not a quality which my cousin had to seek. So I left him in high good-humour with myself, much pleased at my own prowess, and sensible that all immediate annoyance from that quarter was at an end.

Little man knows what God hath prepared for him. Had it not been for his defeat, Gilbert had not left Holland, and my greater misfortunes had never happened. And yet at that hour I rejoiced that I had rid myself of a torment.

Nicol was awaiting me, and soon I was arrayed in my coat once more, for the air was shrewdly cold. My servant was pale as I had never seen him before, and it was clear that he had watched the combat with much foreboding.

'Eh, Maister John,' he cried, 'ye're a braw fechter. I never likit ye half as weel. I thoct a' was ower whiles, but ye aye cam' to yoursel' as sprig as a wull-cat. Ye're maybe a wee thing weak i' the heid-cuts, though,' he added. 'I'll hae to see to ye. It's no' what ye micht ca' profitable to be aye proddin' a man in the wame, for ye may prick him a' ower and him no' muckle the waur. But a guid cleavin' slash on the harns is maist judeicious. It wad kill a stirk.'

It was still early, and we had breakfasted sparsely, so we sought a tavern of good repute, 'The Three Crows,' and made a hearty meal. I was so mightily pleased with my victory, like a child with its toy, that I held my head a full inch higher, and would yield the causeway to no man. I do believe if M. Balagny or the great Lord Herbert had challenged me I should not have refused.

Some three days later I had sure tidings that my cousin had sailed for Leith, and was thought to have no design of returning.

#### CHAPTER XVI.—I SPEND MY DAYS IN IDLENESS.

**S**UMMER came on the heels of spring, and the little strip of garden below my windows grew gay as the frock of a burgher's wife on a Sunday. There were great lines of tulips, purple and red and yellow, stately as kings, erect as a line of soldiers, which extended down the long border nigh to the edge of the water. The lawn was green and well-trimmed, and shaded by the orderly trees. It was pleasant to sit here in the evenings, when Nicol would bring out the supper-table to the grass, and we would drink our ale while the sun was making all the canal a strip of beaten gold.

The routine of my days was as regular as clock-work, for it was always part of my method to apportion my day equally among my duties. In the morning immediately upon rising I went to Master Sandvoort's lecture on the Latin tongue. Then I broke my fast in the little tavern, 'The Gray Goose,' just at the south entrance to the college. It was a clean, well-fitted place, where were found the fattest landlord and the best ale in Holland. Then at the hour of ten in the forenoon I went to listen to the eloquence of Master Quellinus. Having returned thence to my lodging, I was wont to spend the time till dinner in study. Thereafter I walked in the town, or resorted to the houses of my friends, or read in the garden till maybe four o'clock, when it was my custom to go to the dwelling of Sir William Crichton (him whom I have spoken of before), and there, in the company of such Scots gentlemen as pleased to come, to pass the time very pleasantly. From these meetings I had vast profit, for I learned something of the conduct of affairs and the ways



of the world, in the knowledge of which I had still much to seek.

But there were several incidents which befell during this time, and which served to break the monotony of my life, which merit the telling. It was one afternoon as I sat in the arbour that Nicol came across the green followed by an elderly man of grave and comely appearance, in whom to my great joy I recognised my kinsman, Gilbert Burnet of Salisbury. He had alighted in Leyden that morning, and proposed to abide there some days. I would have it that he should put up at my lodgings, and thither he came after many entreaties. During his stay in the city he visited many of the greater folk, for his fame had already gone abroad, and he was welcome everywhere. He was a man of delightful converse; for had he not travelled in many lands and mixed with the most famous? He questioned me as to my progress in letters, and declared himself more than satisfied. 'For, John,' said he, 'I have met many who had greater knowledge, but none of a more refined taste and excellent judgment. Did you decide on the profession of a scholar I think I could promise you a singular success. But indeed it is absurd to think of it; for you, as I take it, are a Burnet and a man of action, and one never to be satisfied with a life of study. I counsel you not to tarry too long in this foreign land, for your country hath sore need of men like you in her present distress.' Then he fell to questioning me as to my opinions on matters political and religious. I told him that I was for the Church and the King to the death, but that I held that the one would be the better of a little moderation in its course, and that the other had fallen into indifferent hands. I told him that it grieved my heart to hear of my own countrymen pursued like partridges on the mountains by some blackguard soldiers, and that when I did return, while deeming it my duty to take the part of the king in all things, I would also think it right to hinder to the best of my power the persecution. In this matter he applauded me. 'What in Heaven's name is all this pother?' he cried. 'Is a man to suffer because he thinks one way of worshipping his God better than another? Rather let us rejoice when he worships Him at all, whether it be at a dyke-side or in the king's chapel.' And indeed in this matter he was of my own way of thinking. When finally he took his leave it was to my great regret, for I found him a man of kindly and sober counsels.

The other matter which I think worth noting was the acquaintance I formed with a Frenchman, one M. de Rohaine, a gentleman of birth, who was in great poverty and abode in a mean street off the Garen Markt. The way in which I first met him was curious. I was coming home late one evening from Master Swinton's house, and in passing through a little alley which leads from near the college to the Garen Markt I was

apprised of some disturbance by a loud noise of tumult. Pushing forward amid a crowd of apprentices and fellows of the baser sort, I saw a little man, maybe a tailor or cobbler from his appearance, with his back against a door and sore pressed by three ruffians, who kept crying out that now they would pay him for his miserly ways. The mob was clearly on their side, for it kept applauding whenever they struck or jostled him. I was just in the act of going forward to put an end to so unequal a combat when a tall, grave man thrust himself out of the throng and cried out in Dutch for them to let go. They answered with some taunt, and almost before I knew he had taken two of the three, one in either hand, and made their heads meet with a sounding crack. I was hugely delighted with the feat, and broke forward to offer my help, for it soon became clear that this champion would have to use all his wits to get out of the place. The three came at him swearing vehemently, and with evil looks in their eyes. He nodded to me as I took my stand at his side.

'Look after the red-beard, friend,' he cried. 'I will take the other two.'

And then I found my hands full indeed, for my opponent was tough and active, and cared nothing for the rules of honourable warfare. In the end, however, my training got the mastery, and I pinked him very prettily in the right leg, and so put him out of the fight. Then I had time to turn to the others, and here I found my new-found comrade sore bested. He had an ugly cut in his forehead, whence a trickle of blood crawled over his face. But his foes were in a worse case still; and when word came at the moment that a body of the guard was coming they made off with all speed.

The man turned and offered me his hand.

'Let me thank you, sir, whoever you may be,' said he. 'I am the Sieur de Rohaine, at your service.'

'And I am Master John Burnet of Barnes in Scotland,' said I.

'What!' he cried, 'a Scot?' And nothing would serve him but that I must come with him to his lodging and join him at supper. For, as it seemed, he himself had just come from Scotland, and was full of memories of the land.

From him I learned something more of the condition of my own land, and it was worse even than I had feared. M. de Rohaine had had many strange adventures in it, but he seemed to shrink from speaking of himself and his own affairs. There was in his eyes a look of fixed melancholy, as of one who had encountered much sorrow in his time and had little hope for more happiness in the world. Yet withal he was so gracious and noble in presence that I felt I was in the company of a man indeed.

If I were to tell all the benefit I derived from this man I should fill a volume and never reach

the end of my tale. Suffice it to say that from him I learned many of the tricks of sword-play, so that soon I became as nigh perfect in the art as it was ever in my power to be. I was scarce ever out of his company, until one day he received a letter from a kinsman bidding him return on urgent necessity. He made his farewells to me with great regret, and on parting bade me count on his aid if I should ever need it. From that day to this I have never cast eyes on his face or heard tidings of him, but I herewith charge all folk of my family who may read this tale, if ever it be their fortune to meet with one of his name or race, that they befriend him to the best of their power, seeing that he did much kindness to me.

In all this time I had had many letters from Marjory, letters writ in a cheerful, pleasant tone, praying indeed for my return, but in no wise complaining of my absence. I looked eagerly for the coming of these letters, for my heart was ever

at Dawyck; and though I much enjoyed my sojourning in Holland, I was yet glad and willing for the time of departure to arrive. In January of the next year I received a bundle of news written in the gayest of spirits; but after that for three months and more I heard nothing. From this long silence I had much food for anxiety; for though I wrote, I am sure, some half-dozen times, no reply ever came. The uneasiness into which this put me cast something of a gloom over the latter part of the winter. I invented a hundred reasons to explain it. Marjory might be ill; the letters might have gone astray; perhaps she had naught to tell me. But I could not satisfy myself with these excuses, so I had e'en to wait the issue of events.

It was not till the month of April that I had news from my love, and what this was I shall hasten to tell.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE CAPE GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.



At a recent meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, Earl Grey said he doubted whether there were many questions in the whole circle of politics more important at present than those in connection with the extension, consolidation, and improvement of railways in South Africa; and a member of the House of Commons present at the opening of the line to Buluwayo (or Bulawayo) in November, a line piercing 1360 miles into the recesses of the Dark Continent, avowed that he had never before realised the greatness of Britain's destiny in Africa.

The success of the Cape government railways may be characterised as almost phenomenal, considering that every ounce of material for the iron road has had to be transported 6000 miles, and in view of the many natural obstacles that have had to be overcome in the matter of construction. In view of the vast future possibilities which are being opened up, no less than the present material prosperity in course of development, and the numbers of men who are attracted to the service from the mother-country and elsewhere, a few jottings by a railway-hand, who for thirty years past has made the Cape of Good Hope his home, may not be uninteresting or uninteresting.

When the writer landed at Capetown in the year 1865, the entire system comprised a private line to Wellington, forty-five miles in length, with a short branch of eight miles to the suburb of Wynberg; to-day the government has under its control and administration over 2000 miles, representing a capital of something like twenty-

two millions sterling, showing an interest-return of close upon nine per cent. The small and insignificant-looking corrugated-iron shed which in the early days did duty as a passenger and goods terminus in Capetown has been supplanted by a palatial pile of buildings, forming one of the architectural features of the city; but every day emphasises the fact that even the latter is too limited, and plans are now in hand for very large extension. Standing on one of the platforms awaiting the departure of the nine o'clock P.M. train for the North, one has difficulty in realising that one is 6000 miles from the hub of the universe; and, were it not for the coloured faces, you might by no great effort of imagination almost fancy yourself at Charing Cross or Victoria. The handsomely upholstered, electrically lit, and well-appointed saloon coaches, the travelling post-office with its busy staff of sorters, and all the various concomitants of railway economy, cannot fail to impress the spectator, and convince him of the rapid march of progress in the southern hemisphere. All sorts and conditions of men are in evidence—black, white, and gray, Kaffirs, Malays, and Europeans. Paupers mingle with millionaires; there are numbers of young fellows just fresh from home, full of life and vigour, bent on trying their luck in the domain of gold and diamonds; and weary invalids searching for health, which they are sanguine of attaining in the dry, bracing uplands of the North. Night after night, year in and year out, there is the same busy scene of animation and excitement. Indeed the authorities, in view of the large congregation of idlers and loungers 'to see the train off,' have

imposed a charge of threepence upon every person not an actual passenger going on to the platform; but even this restriction does not seem to diminish the crowd.

When one steps ashore at the commodious and extensive docks in Table Bay from one of the 'Castle' or 'Union' liners plying every week between England and the Cape, arrangements can be made for the through booking and registration of baggage to any part of South Africa; and the traveller, thus relieved of all worry and anxiety, can hail a hansom, and in five minutes be driven to the railway station, whence two trains a day, morning and evening, depart for Kimberley, Johannesburg, and Buluwayo, which last-named place, by the way, only a few years ago was the kraal of a merciless and bloodthirsty savage despot. It seems almost like a romance; but there is more to follow, and many now living may very likely yet see the day when it will be possible to go by rail from Capetown to Cairo.

One can travel on the Cape government railways either first, second, or third class according to the length of his purse; third class is about a penny a mile, and the others in proportion. A reliable and experienced conductor is in attendance on each train, and passengers are supplied with meals on board at a fixed charge of half-a-crown each, and with light refreshments at moderate charges. To add to the comforts of travelling, bedding, consisting of mattress, blankets, sheet, and pillow, is supplied at a small extra charge; indeed no trouble or expense is spared to render the journey as agreeable as possible. Many improvements are being made at the various refreshment rooms along the lines, and the tariff of charges is one of the subjects of official control, which prevents anything like fleecing.

With so large a mileage, and with a large increase in the number of trains running, it cannot be expected that there should be immunity from accidents; but these are few and far between, and the provision of the tablet system, which it is proposed shortly to bring into operation, will be an additional safeguard. During 1896 there were only thirty-four deaths from train casualties, and of this number eight occurred to railway employes. A very large proportion of the line is fenced in on both sides, and the government offers special facilities to farmers living adjacent to the track who are desirous of having their lands enclosed, so as to prevent their cattle straying and being run over and destroyed.

Railways and public works in the Cape Colony constitute a ministerial department, of which the Hon. Sir J. Sivewright, K.C.M.G., is the present commissioner; the more im-

mediate details of working, however, are in the hands of a general manager, who has held the post for about seventeen years past, and has acquitted himself in a manner satisfactory alike to the government and the public generally. He is assisted by a chief traffic manager, engineer-in-chief, chief locomotive superintendent, and accounting officer, each head having in turn his respective staff. The heads of departments meet the general manager periodically for the purposes of mutual consultation and advice in regard to matters affecting working and maintenance. Larger questions of general policy are practically vested in the ministry of the day. The advantages of state as compared with joint-stock railways may be open to debate; but this much is certain, that the Cape railways are worked smoothly and efficiently; one hears comparatively very little dissatisfaction on the part of the public, while the financial results are all that could be desired. For instance, the revenue which in 1887 amounted to £1,200,000 rose in 1896 to £4,100,000. In 1887 the number of passengers conveyed was 2,200,000; in 1896 the number was 8,000,000. The tonnage of goods carried was, in 1887, 350,000; in 1896 it was 1,350,000. Figures such as these are very striking as showing the wonderful increase of traffic, and abundantly justify the prosecution of railway enterprise in the country.

So far as internal economy is concerned, the railways being owned by the government, the officers and employes, with the exception of daily-paid men, constitute part of the colonial civil service, and enjoy all the privileges attaching thereto. At the age of sixty, for instance (and in the case of engine-drivers at fifty), a man can retire on a pension equal to one-sixtieth of his salary for every year of service. For a payment of two shillings a month, every member of the staff, from the general manager to a carriage-cleaner, can have medical attendance with medicine for not only himself but his family, however numerous. The holiday arrangements are also on a fairly liberal scale; and if a man allows his annual leave to accumulate he can, after a specified time, proceed to Europe for six months, three on full and three on half-pay. A good number avail themselves of this privilege, as the rate of salary paid is sufficient to enable those of a thrifty disposition to lay by after a few years' work sufficient to enable them to renew acquaintance with friends and relatives in the old country.

The education of railway children, very many of whom of necessity live far removed from the centres of civilisation, has lately received a good deal of attention at the hands of the government, and a railway education officer has been appointed, whose duty it is to attend to railway schools, reorganising where necessary those already in existence, and starting fresh

schools where practicable. There is also a railway training-office, which is largely made use of by young men anxious to qualify themselves for appointments; classes for the acquisition of shorthand and typewriting are also held. Lads on entering the service receive £4 a month; but if they show any aptitude and ability they are soon pushed ahead, as, with the largely increasing traffic and the frequent opening up of new sections, chances of promotion are always occurring. At the same time, men from the mother-country with good railway experience are almost sure of being taken on when they apply, especially in the traffic department; and the writer knows many who in England or Scotland received a bare pittance, but are now enjoying substantial salaries with the additional advantage

of easier hours and speedier prospects of promotion. In this connection I cannot do better than conclude by quoting from the last report of the general manager: 'While good work is done in the training-office, it cannot be expected that the short training the men receive can qualify them for all the varied work that railway men have to apply themselves to; but the demand for men has been so great that we have often been compelled to employ young men before they were duly qualified for their appointments. The same difficulty has been experienced in other branches of the service; and it is a matter of surprise that the demand for men of all descriptions should have been so great during the last two or three years.'

## L I N D A.

CHAPTER IV.—1897.



HE new year was two months old, and the outlook at the head of the Bonanza was a desperate one. In some respects the time had passed more tolerably than the previous year, for Twilight Ben had become humanised, if not Christianised, and proved himself more sociable. Besides, he had fallen in love at second-hand with little Linda, and Jim wasn't a bit jealous.

'Say, pard,' he would observe, filling his pipe and squatting on his heels, with his back against the logs of the hut, 'jest toot us a yarn 'bout this yer little schule-marm of yourn over yander at the spellin'-schule in Kansas.'

Then Jim, nothing loth, would enthusiastically sing her praises again and again. And so passed many a pleasant hour of well-earned leisure, and it was a better tonic to Jim than all the physic in a drug-store.

They had, too, the satisfaction of being pretty certain that they had a valuable dump ready for cleaning-up. And yet, otherwise, things had gone badly with them. On those awful, snow-clad heights that hemmed in the little straggling camp game there was practically none. Once the pair had, with the occupants of the nearest claim below, caught a moose and shared the spoils, and twice Twilight Ben had shot a fox. That was all that had come in their way to swell the larder, and now starvation stared them in the face. Already men in the creek had died from hunger, and food was not to be had for love or gold. A handful of beans, a meagre chunk of rancid bacon, and a few pounds of flour were all that remained; and it was hopeless to expect fresh supplies up the river by steamer before the end of June. True, a pack-train might possibly before

that reach them, or, as soon as the journey to Forty Mile City was practicable, a bare subsistence might perhaps be had at an enormous price; but, at the best, a couple of months must elapse before they could hope for relief, and there was barely provision to keep body and soul together for one month.

Moodily they sat in their lonely cabin and discussed the situation; or, at least, Jim discussed it, while his chum sat silently smoking. Walled up in a living grave, helpless in that dark solitude—helpless, and yet treading upon riches that in almost any other part of the world would have procured them every earthly comfort—it was hard to die. And to die, too, without another sight of Linda. It was a thousand tortures.

'Linda! Linda! Linda!' he wailed pitifully, and buried his face in his hands.

For five minutes a ghastly silence reigned in the hut, and neither of the men gave sign or motion. Then, knocking the ashes from his pipe, Twilight Ben rose to his feet, and observed in a casual tone:

'Say, pard, this yer's bed-rock. I calkerlate I'll jest prospect round and shoot 'uthin' to make the pervisions hold out a spell longer.'

Jim heard him only mechanically, and took no notice of him as he left the hut. The next instant a sharp report drove the words home to his absent brain, and he sprang excitedly through the door into the open. Twilight Ben *had* shot something. Over the terrible ice-bound heights the Northern Lights flashed and flamed in the heavens, lighting up that snow-white sepulchre with their weird, fitful radiance. And in the foreground, revolver still in hand and finger on the trigger, lay Twilight Ben with a bullet-hole through his chest.

With one bound Jim was on his knees by the



prostrate man's side, but he could do no good. The life was fast oozing away. He held the dying man's hand in his, and felt his grip returned with a feeble pressure of the horny fingers. For a moment the old sinner's eyes opened, and a smile passed over his face—a smile that almost transformed his ugly features—as he whispered:

'Say, pard, I calkerlate I've shot suthin' that'll help you hold out till supplies come in. I'm going—over yander now. Give my—respec's—to—the—little—schule-marm—and—'

And Twilight Ben had gone 'over yander.'

The summer was nearly over, and the woodbine on the walls of the log schoolhouse at Oloville was beginning to turn crimson. Inside, Linda was for the fifth time that week giving the children a lesson in geography. Somehow, during the past two years, those children had had a lot of geography lessons. Say what you will to the contrary, the world is a big place, and there is a lot of geography in it. And as it is generally admitted that it is far better to know one branch of a science, and know it well, than to skip hurriedly over the whole superficial surface of it and understand little or nothing of it at the finish, Linda had directed the attention of her youthful students towards Alaska and the neighbouring districts of British Columbia; so that, after two years of careful attention to that locality, they were getting to know it pretty well, and were nearly ready to turn to some other less important part of the globe.

The dainty little school-marm was a trifle thinner than she was on that other afternoon that seemed so long ago; and she was more staid. She had been paler, too, during those two long, weary years—pale with anxiety for him who was away groping for gold in the northern night. But now a bright flush had come back to her cheeks ever since—just a fortnight previously—that letter had come which now lay hidden away in the bosom of her dress, nearest to her heart, which it had instantly warmed into a fever of joyful expectancy. Jim was coming home! There was a wistful gleam of hungry love in her dark-blue eyes, and little Linda looked more bewitching than ever.

The geography lesson ended, as it usually did, on a now famous tributary of the river Yukon; school was over for the day, and, as the children rushed out of the door, a stranger who was approaching it was all but overwhelmed in the human avalanche. For a moment the youngsters stopped and stared curiously at him, but it was nobody they recognised, and they quickly sped away.

The westering sun threw a long shadow on the schoolhouse floor as the stranger paused within the doorway. Linda stopped with a sudden start in her task of gathering up the slates and exercise-books, and a wild hope set her heart thumping madly. She leaned, trembling violently, against

a desk for support, afraid to look up lest the new-comer should not be *him*. And still the stranger paused, speechless, upon the threshold. Linda, with one hand pressed tightly on her breast, was struggling to brace herself against possible disappointment. At last she raised her eyes and turned them towards the door. The tension of the moment was over, and yet the reaction was cruel—terribly cruel. Her heart sank with a sickening sensation, and all the hot blood fled from her face and neck in icy streams that chilled her, as she found herself face to face with the unfamiliar and unknown. Vaguely she wondered what could be his business here. What did he want with her?—he, this unknown old man, with the white hair and the long beard streaked with silver sweeping his bosom, and the big hollow eyes that frightened her with their hungry stare, and the bowed shoulders, and the sunken, haggard cheeks, and the pinched nose, and the starved cheek-bones that seemed trying to burst through the tight-drawn, dried-up skin. For a minute they stood looking at one another—these two. Then the unknown spoke, and it was in an unknown voice, for in a hoarse, cracked, rattling tone came the one word:

'Linda!'

For a second the little school-marm's heart stood still, as she gasped for breath, and her legs shook violently under her.

'Linda—little Linda! it's me—Jim!' he went on, in the same hoarse, decrepit voice, and he stretched out his arms entreatingly.

Yet she only shrank, shivering, from him, and continued to stare at him with unconcealed terror in her dilated eyes.

'Sweetheart, I guess this hes come too sudden-like on you, pore lamb!' Jim said, with something in his throat that broke up his words into queer little husky quavers. 'You don't jest realise yet thet it's me—come back with enough gold to make you comfortable fur life. Yas, shore enough, it's me, Linda—Jim—*yo'r* Jim!' and, carried away by his emotion, he made a step towards her.

'No, no!' she cried hastily, as, flinging up her arms before her as though to ward off a dreaded blow, she retreated from him. 'Don't touch me! I can't bear it! Go! Leave me alone! You frighten me. Have mercy on me! Go away—go—go! It's not *my* Jim—not *my* Jim!' she wailed piteously.

'Gosh!' Jim sighed wearily to himself, as a new light broke cruelly upon him and froze up every morsel of hope in his breast; 'I reckon I'm beginning to git the hang of things. Wall, I allus allowed she was too good fur me, so thet I couldn't hardly ever believe she could ever be mine. And so I reckon I oughter be resigned; but it's powerful hard—powerful hard. And yit the Lord was very good to me to give me her love even fur a little while. Yit it's powerful hard—powerful hard. Pore little Linda!'

With a dazed stare the little school-marm watched him limp slowly from the room without another word, saw his bowed head pass the window; and then she sank on the floor, and quietly fainted away.

Later, 'Linda tossed restlessly upon her bed in the gable-room at Eben Hutchin's. Mechanically she heard the clock in the parlour below strike ten and eleven. Her eyes ached with staring at the darkness, and yet no sleep came to close the weary eyelids. Her heart ached with straining for her Jim—the other Jim—the one who had gone away and carried all her love with him; not *this* Jim whom she could not recognise—and yet no peace came to soothe the gnawing pain. And all she could do was to moan dismally:

'I have no Jim now. It is not *my* Jim. My love is dead—dead!'

The clock in the parlour below struck twelve, and 'Linda sprang off the bed. If she lay there any longer, alone in the darkness with that tormenting nightmare, she would go mad. Besides, the atmosphere in the room was stifling. She could not breathe. She moved across to the window to let in the cool night air; and, as she drew aside the curtains and looked out, a light suddenly flickered in the darkness, and went out. It flickered again and burned into a steady light that shone from a window across the way and a little lower down the road. She watched it absently. Twice a shadow passed between the light and the window. Then she recollected. It was the schoolhouse window she was looking at, and somebody was in the schoolhouse! The door, she knew, she had locked. Could burglars have— But no; there was nothing of value in the place to tempt thieves. Who else could be there at this time of night? There was only one conclusion her wearied brain could come to—it must be *Jim*—No, no! there was no Jim for her now! It must be *the man*—the unknown Jim who had terrified her so. What could he be doing in the schoolhouse?

The minutes dragged by slowly until half-an-hour had passed. And still she watched; and still the light streamed steadily from the schoolhouse window. The shadow once more came betwixt the light and the window, and the next instant the light went out. She strained her eyes; but all was black, and only to her quick ears came the sound of the window being gently closed. Next she heard the sound of footsteps on the road, footsteps that slowly got fainter and fainter until they died away in the distance down the grade.

Hastily dressing herself in the dark, she put on her hat, let herself quietly out of the house, and hurried across in her slippers to the schoolhouse. The door was still locked. With her key she opened it, passed inside, and

lighted the lamp. All was as she had left it, save that the window was unfastened and a splinter had been broken from the sash where it had been forced open—and—yes—there was a small package on her desk, tied up and addressed to her. The writing was terribly shaky, and yet there was something of Jim's hand in it—the old Jim's. Breathlessly she cut the string, and tore it open, and as she did so a bundle of bank-notes fell upon the desk. She took no heed of them, for she had a letter in her hand; and as she read it the scales fell from her dazed eyes and she saw clearly.

The letter was simple and straightforward. The writer had not dared to use affectionate epithets, lest he should betray the anguish he was struggling manfully to strangle. The letter simply ran:

'You are right. I don't blame you. I can see it all now, and for your sake I thank Heaven that you found out before it was too late that you were not made for the likes of me. You tried to love me I know, but you just couldn't do it. It wasn't likely. I ought to have known that, and stood out of the way for some other fellow who was more your equal, and could have made you happy. I'm going away now, so that the sight of me won't ever pain or annoy you again. But before I start I have got a kind of trust to close. Afore I set out for Alaska, I just settled one thing in my mind, and I solemnly vowed, "Come rain or come shine, what gold the Lord puts into my hand this trip is 'Linda's—every cent of it." You will find it all in this package—forty-three thousand dollars I took out of the Bonanza and fifteen thousand I sold the claim for—in notes on the Union Bank, 'Frisco, for fifty-eight thousand dollars. There was a matter of a few odd dollars besides that I have taken the liberty of keeping for present expenses until I get a job, knowing that you would not grudge them me. When you read this I shall be far away. Try to think kindly of me sometimes. God keep and prosper you all the days of your life.'

'JAMES VICKERSON.'

With flaming cheeks and heaving breast, she read it through to the end. Then she pressed the writing wildly to her lips, and held it tightly to her breast. Passionately she cried and laughed and laughed and cried—cried for shame and laughed for joy. A hundred times she kissed the letter, and her scalding tears ran down on to it and blurred the writing. And all the time, between her sobs and laughter, she was crying over and over again:

'It is *my* Jim—*my* Jim! Oh, how heartless and wicked I must have seemed! And yet my heart was his—every bit his—all the time; but it didn't recognise him till now. Yes, it's *my* Jim—the same old, dear Honest Jim—and I was blind and couldn't see him!'

Soon an awful fear crept over her. Had she found her Jim only to lose him again? 'When you read this I shall be far away' he had written. He had not thought she would read it until school-time. He must be going away by the night train. The cars came through Oloville at two o'clock. She gave one hurried glance at the clock. It was then a quarter to two, and the depôt was a mile and a-half away. Her heart sank. Stop! There was just one hope. The cars might be late. Leaving the bank-notes strewed upon the desk, but still claspings in her fingers that precious letter, she turned out the lamp, and flew out into the night.

Stumbling and slipping in the darkness, she sped down the grade at her utmost pace. Thorns by the wayside caught and tore her dress, and still she flew onward. Her hat vanished in the gloom and her hair streamed out behind her blacker than the night, but she never halted a second. Soon an ugly stone in her way wrenched off one slipper, yet she never paused—at least not longer than to kick off the other one, which now incommoded her running. She was getting nearer the depôt. She could see the signal light. The loose stones on the track cut through her stockings and bruised her feet; yet she never even felt them, for in the distance she could hear the rumble

of the approaching cars as they thundered down the grade from Dipsburgh. She could see the lights of the train now, creeping swifter and swifter over the prairie. It was a race for life—for love. Her stockings hung in rags about her bleeding feet as she strove every nerve to increase her speed. Once she tripped over a loose shingle lying in the road, and fell heavily, cutting her hands badly on the track. In a second she was up again, and flying on. She could hear the engineer clap on the brakes as the cars began to slow down into the depôt that was still fifty yards ahead. One last wild, frantic effort, and she bounded on to the platform as the solitary passenger, with one hand on the handle, was about to step into the car. A dart—a spring! and she had caught him by the arm and dragged him back.

'Jim—Jim!' she gasped wildly, as she struggled fiercely for breath. 'Take me back again, Jim!—my Jim!—my own Jim! I was blind—cruel—unworthy, but never false. Take me back, Jim! Let me be your servant—slave—dog! but take me back!'

And, as the cars rolled out into the night, Jim took her—bleeding, weeping, tattered, and dishevelled—into his arms and held her tightly to his breast. But he could not take her back to his heart, for she had never left it.

## THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

### SUBMARINE NAVIGATION.



HE ideas so cleverly worked out in Jules Verne's romance, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, are at last realised to a considerable extent by a vessel called *Argonaut*, which is the invention of Mr Simon Lake of Baltimore. This submarine boat is not intended for purposes of warfare, although, no doubt, it will point the way to some offensive weapon of the same nature. It is intended for the salvage of wrecks, and will carry a crew of divers, who will be able, like those described by Jules Verne, to leave the vessel when necessary to work on the sea-bottom. This submarine boat is cylindrical in form, each end being pointed like a cigar. At the top is a conning-tower for the pilot, and at the prow is a powerful electric searchlight. The propeller is driven by a gasoline engine at the rate of about five miles an hour on the surface, and much faster when the vessel is submerged. The boat has four wheels upon which it can creep along the bottom, the engine-power being shunted from the propeller to these wheels when occasion arises. But the most important fact with regard to the new submarine vessel is that it has been through

a successful trial lasting two hours, during which time the crew suffered no harm from being shut out of all communication with the outer air.

### SANITATION IN LONDON.

In his new-year's address as president of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association, Sir John Hutton gave a very interesting account of the manner in which sanitary progress in the metropolis had influenced the death-rate. He said that the aim and the result of his association were to promote longevity; and so far they had been most successful. Looking back a couple of centuries, he found that the death-rate in London in the year 1660 was no less than 80 per 1000—in 1896 it was only 18.9. This was a remarkable contrast, especially when he considered the increased number of houses and the density of the population. At the beginning of the present century London had 142,042 houses, in 1831 the number had swollen to more than a quarter of a million, and this had increased in 1896 to 596,030. With regard to increase in the metropolitan population, the numbers living in London were less than a million in 1801, but in 1896 they had increased to nearly four and a half millions. He warned his hearers that the water question should be seen to in the near future, and urged them to protest

against the present happy-go-lucky policy of dealing with the water-supply. The late epidemic of typhoid at Maidstone was a lesson which Londoners could not afford to ignore.

#### CEMENT PIPES.

Pipes for the carriage of water have from time to time been made of all kinds of materials, from the hollowed tree-trunks which are occasionally unearthed in our cities, to the paper contrivances soaked in pitch which have been recommended as efficient in more modern times. A Frenchman has recently invented a novel form of pipe which should be valuable for drainage and other purposes. A trench is dug in the ground where the pipe is required to be laid, and is partly filled in with good cement. Upon this soft substratum is laid a rubber tube covered with canvas and tightly inflated with air. The trench is now filled up with cement, so that the tube is completely covered with an inch or more of the plastic material. As soon as the cement sets, the air is let out of the tube, and it is easily extracted from the pipe of which it for a time formed the core. The tube can then be again inflated to serve for a fresh section of the pipe, which can be as much as six inches in diameter if required. It is said that a cement pipe of this thickness has been successfully laid by the new method at a cost of about one shilling per yard.

#### A NEW LIFE-BELT.

Swimmers are generally very suspicious with regard to life-belts, for unless these contrivances are well made and properly adjusted they are positively dangerous in use. Some are so bulky that they impede all action. This defect certainly applies to the cork waistcoats adopted by the National Lifeboat Institution, and it will be remembered that in the recent fatal capsizing of a lifeboat at Margate the men had not donned their corks on this very ground. A new kind of belt—known as the Louiton Float—is described and illustrated in a French journal; and it has the appearance of a conger eel with conical ends. Made of sheet rubber, it passes round the neck, across the chest, and round the waist, and can be inflated in one minute by the mouth; and its weight is about one pound. This life-belt or float is flexible, light, and easily placed in position. It can be worn without inconvenience, and is designed among other purposes for the use of swimming schools.

#### THE TRANSPORT OF LIVING FISH.

Those who have had the opportunity of tasting fish which the cook has been able to get direct from the sea know well what a contrast the food affords to fish which has gone the usual round of markets and shops. A fresh herring, for example, cooked under such conditions is a most delicious

morsel. Mr F. G. Maardt, a Danish engineer, recognising the advantage of supplying consumers with fresh fish, has patented an apparatus by which the creatures can be conveyed by rail for any reasonable distance in a live state. This apparatus is fitted to an ordinary railway truck, and consists of a tank of sea-water divided by a partition in such a way that the water, actuated and aerated by pumps, is kept in constant circulation. The fish contained in the tank cannot rest, but have to stem the strong current in the tank, the pumps being worked by a small steam-engine. In a tank capable of holding two thousand pounds of fish, the water will pass through five times in the course of an hour; and although it is stated that the water is re-oxygenised in the process, the means whereby this is done are not detailed. At a recent trial of the apparatus sixteen hundred pounds of fish were kept alive for eight days, although previously they had been kept for three days in ordinary salt-water boxes in the harbour at Frederikshavn. The cost of preserving fish in this manner is said to come to less than one farthing per pound, presumably for each day during which the apparatus is at work.

#### A NEW MAGAZINE-RIFLE.

There is no finality in the weapons of war: we are constantly finding out improved methods of slaughtering our fellow-creatures. For a long time it was considered that the Martini-Henry rifle performed this work to perfection, until it was discovered that more men could be killed in a given time by the Lee-Metford—the weapon which has now been adopted by the British army. Lately, however, an inventor, who hails from Victoria, in the person of Mr T. R. R. Ashton, has brought forward a rifle which, in competition with the two weapons already named, leaves them far behind in point of weight, speed of firing, and accuracy. The new weapon is at the same time more simple in construction than the others, comprising a less number of parts, and can be more easily cleaned. The Ashton rifle has been submitted to the British War Office, and may supersede the Lee-Metford if the tests here corroborate those which have been made in Australia.

#### THE THAMES A SALMON RIVER.

Less than a century ago the king of fishes, the salmon, was found in the river Thames; and there is evidence to show that in earlier times it was common in that stream. Since then Father Thames has been badly treated; about thirty years back the water became so charged with sewage and the refuse of factories that it was poisonous not only to fish but to the dwellers on its banks. The upper Thames remained clean, it is true; but this was of no moment to the salmon, whose instincts make them visit the sea at stated



times. So the fish ceased to appear in the metropolitan river. With improved methods of dealing with the sewage, and by the aid of stringent laws against other sources of pollution, the Thames is now comparatively clean once more; and it is believed that the salmon could now live in its waters. An association has therefore been formed to ascertain experimentally whether this is the case; and it is suggested that some two-year-old smolts should be introduced into the upper waters of the river in order to see whether in a few months' time they have made their way to the sea and returned as grilse. Should this be found to be the case, the river would be stocked on a larger scale, and the Thames might once more teem with salmon, as it is said to have done in the past.

#### THE NEXT POLAR EXPEDITION.

The one great ambition of Lieutenant Peary is to reach the North Pole; and in July next he will start upon that hazardous enterprise. As our readers well know, Lieutenant Peary is no stranger to arctic exploration, and during the past six years he has been the leader of a series of expeditions to Greenland which have accomplished good work. He has thus had plenty of opportunity of thinking out the best method of reaching the Pole, and his plans are now matured. He will first advance to Sherard Osborn Fjörd with a very small crew, but he will pick up on his way several Eskimo whom he has already engaged for the expedition. Here the men and stores will be landed, and the ship will return. From this base he will attempt to cross the sea to the Pole, and will try again and again to accomplish the journey should he not at first succeed. He thinks that possibly there may be islands between Greenland and the Pole, in which case one of these would serve as an advanced base of operations. Each succeeding summer the ship will do its best to reach the original base, so that the brave sledging party will be to some extent in touch with the outer world.

#### RARE BUTTERFLIES.

In a recent number of the *Scientific American* Mr G. E. Walsh gives some interesting particulars with reference to the capture and cost of rare butterflies in different parts of the world. Some of these insects will fetch the most extraordinary prices, and therefore hunters will run into all kinds of danger in the hope of securing them. It is said, too, that unscrupulous traders will resort to fraud in order to palm off bogus specimens upon the unwary, actually going so far as to dye ordinary varieties, and to make up unique specimens by borrowing the wings from two or three kinds of butterflies. It is said that London firms employ travelling entomologists in every part of the globe, and more especially in out-of-the-way districts far from civilisation. These men go into

the great tropical forests, and carry their lives in their hands. They generally unite butterfly-catching with orchid and lizard-hunting, and will carry implements for the capture of all three. Some of the butterflies will flit about the tops of high trees, and much dangerous climbing has to be done to get near them. Others are captured by the aid of decoys—either butterflies of the same species or bits of coloured cloth; others again are snared by sugaring the tree-trunks. The captured butterfly is dropped into a poison bottle, where it quickly dies; and, when opportunity offers, its stiffness is relaxed by its being placed in a box with damp flannel, after which it can be mounted with wings extended, in order to show its beauties to the best advantage. Some collections of these beautiful objects there are which are valued at many thousands of pounds.

#### AN ALUMINIUM BALLOON.

The metal aluminium has now become so cheap that it is constantly employed where extreme lightness is required; but few would have chosen it as the material for the envelope of a balloon. But a balloon of this character, cigar-shaped, with a body measuring one hundred and thirty-four feet long by forty-six feet in diameter, has been made and tried with sufficient success to make a repetition of the experiment desirable. The inventor was Herr Schwarz of Agram, who died, unfortunately, just before the day of the experimental ascent—November 3. This ascent took place under the auspices of the Royal Prussian Aërial Navigation Department; and it is to be regretted that the officers were under the mistaken impression that the new balloon was too heavy to rise, and stripped the machine of certain appliances, the absence of which eventually led to disaster. One of these was a device for keeping the belt of the engine in place, and another a contrivance to receive the shock on rapid descent to the ground. The balloon went up and attained a good speed; but suddenly the belting slipped, the aeronaut lost his presence of mind, opened the valve, and down came the machine with a force which wrecked it. Another air-ship on the same lines is now to be built under official protection.

#### HOME-MADE SODA-WATER.

Soda-water, usually consisting of water charged with carbonic acid gas and quite innocent of soda, is such a favourite beverage that a method by which the consumer can compound it for himself is a matter of some interest. Carbonic acid, or—to give it its more modern name—carbon dioxide, assumes a liquid form under comparatively low pressure. In this form it is, for this purpose, contained in steel cylindrical shells, which are about one inch in length and look somewhat like rifle-bullets. These shells, charged with liquid carbon dioxide, will presently be procur-

able, we understand, at the price of about one penny each. One of these is dropped into a special form of bottle which has been previously filled with plain water; and the insertion of a screw stopper, while it closes the vessel, releases the liquefied gas from the shell, which quickly permeates the water and changes it into an effervescing beverage. It is obvious that, instead of plain water, sweetened and flavoured liquids can be employed, or still wines may be changed to sparkling ones. Possibly it has occurred to the manufacturers that hand-grenades on the same principle would be invaluable in coping with an outbreak of fire, for carbon dioxide is a most deadly enemy to combustion, and if quickly applied at the initial stages of a fire might be of much greater service than half-a-dozen steam fire-engines ten minutes later.

#### THE STORAGE OF FLOUR.

Our military and naval authorities are now submitting to careful test a system of flour storage from which great results are anticipated. It is an old idea to establish national granaries to hold reserves of wheat in case war should shut us out from our usual sources of foreign supply. But great difficulties come in the way of the accomplishment of such a scheme; the grain being, for one thing, liable to germinate and become utterly useless. In a word, grain cannot be kept in good condition in large quantities for any length of time. The new suggestion, now being tested under different climatic conditions, is to take flour, not grain, and to compress it under hydraulic agency into solid blocks or bricks. It is found that such blocks are not assailable by damp, that the heavy pressure destroys all forms of larval life, and that the product is safe from the attacks of insects. Moreover, the bulk of the flour by this treatment is reduced so much that three hundred pounds can be stored in the space which would be filled by one hundred pounds of loose flour. Should this interesting experiment prove to be successful, the system will, as a matter of course, be extended to the handling and sale of flour generally, to the convenience and profit of traders and consumers alike.

#### A GUN WHICH TAKES TO PIECES.

The transport of heavy ordnance from place to place is one of the most serious difficulties which military authorities have to face, especially when the work has to be accomplished in out-of-the-way districts destitute of railways or roads. For mountain warfare a gun of small calibre has for many years been in use, which can be unscrewed into two pieces for ease of transport by two camels or other available animals, and rapidly put together when required for use; but no attempt has hitherto been made to construct large weapons on the same lines. Mr E. J. Blood

of Chicago has, however, now invented a method of building up ordnance in sections, which, should it bear the necessary tests as to stability, &c., will be most valuable in placing guns of heavy calibre in situations which under present conditions could not possibly be defended with such weapons. The new guns are built up of a number of rolled sheet-steel discs, held together between thick plates or cross-heads by steel tie-rods. The breech part of the gun is further strengthened by bolts carried through holes in the discs forming that portion of the weapon. Such a gun could be carried piecemeal by pack-animals, even by portage, to its destination, and there screwed together by the nuts, tie-rods, and bolts which form an essential feature of its design. The other advantages claimed for this method of construction are that it ensures thorough inspection and ready detection of flaws in the metal at every part, that the time of construction is greatly reduced from the fact that the different parts can be distributed among many workshops, and that the inner barrel can be readily removed and another put in its place in case of corrosion or other accidents.

#### TO THE NORTH POLE WITH STEAM-RAMS.

Boats described as steam-rams are now in use in ice-locked Russian harbours and rivers, and have proved that they can force their way through thick ice, even with seventy-two degrees of frost. The harbour of Vladivostok, till of late hermetically sealed for four or five months, has since 1893 been kept accessible through the winter; the Finnish port of Hangö is now open to commerce throughout the year. And last winter a similar steam-ram kept up connection with the Ural railway through the ice of the Volga at Saratoff. It is proposed now to keep open, by stronger boats of this kind, the communication of St Petersburg with the sea, and to force a winter connection through the ice from Archangel to the mouth of the Yenisei. Admiral Makarof, addressing the Russian Geographical Society, insists that still more powerful boats of this kind might safely be counted on to cope with polar ice, such as Nansen had to deal with, and to cut a passage to the North Pole.

#### THE ARTESIAN WELLS OF QUEENSLAND.

In an elaborate paper on Queensland and its resources in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* for December last, we see it authoritatively affirmed that a large area of Western Queensland, formerly hopelessly arid and useless for pastoral or any other purposes, has been completely transformed by artesian wells, drawing supplies from the water now known to be stored in the Lower Cretaceous formation (which underlies fifty-six per cent. of the whole colony). Of these artesian wells 454 have been sunk, of an average depth of 1168 feet; 317 overflow naturally, and the total produce is stated at over 193,000,000 gallons daily.

On the eastern side of the coastal range there are further thirteen artesian wells, of an aggregate depth of 13,200 feet. Some of these bores yield between three and four million gallons daily.

#### SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION ON SHIPBOARD.

At a meeting in September last Mr F. M. Syme addressed the Insurance Institute of Victoria on the subject of 'Causes of Fire,' and gave some very interesting information with regard to what is commonly known as 'the spontaneous combustion of coal cargoes.' This phenomenon, by which many good ships have been destroyed, was at one time attributed either to the oxidation of iron pyrites, an impurity always present in coal, or to the influence of moisture. Experiment has shown that both these theories are untenable, and it is now believed that this mischief is due

to the chemical action set up by the absorption in the coal of atmospheric oxygen. Large coal, where the proportion of surface to bulk is comparatively small, is the safest, and any heat that may be evolved is rapidly carried off by the air-spaces between the lumps. But, owing to the rough manner in which coals are generally dumped into a ship's hold, the coal is broken up into fragments, and is prepared, as it were, for spontaneous combustion. It is found, moreover, that the fire invariably begins just below the hatchway, where a cone of broken coal is formed by this rough method of loading. It has also been ascertained that a large bulk of coal is more liable to combustion than a small one, and that loading during a high summer temperature has a direct bearing upon the liability of coal-ships to this form of accident.

## HOME-COMING.

By Mrs M. CORBET-SEYMOUR.



**A**FTER nearly twenty years of life in foreign cities, the home-coming is not an unmingled pleasure. Even the sight of Dover Cliffs does not awaken one's patriotic feelings. We have looked at them several times with more satisfaction when ours has been a holiday-visit to England; a return ticket to London and back setting a limit to our stay. But this is 'coming for good,' as children say; for it has suddenly been borne in upon our inner consciousness that, if we really intend to die in the mother-country (as we have always stoutly declared) it will not do to reside too long on the other side of the Channel.

So here we are. Has our native tongue grown strange to us, or is there something in the Kentish dialect which puzzles us? Did the middle classes speak with more refinement twenty years ago than now? For even in the greetings of well-dressed men and women on the pier, the letter 'h' seems a forgotten quantity, and I hear a pretty girl assuring a friend, whom she has welcomed at the landing-place, that 'the Dover people 'old their 'eads that 'igh there's no bearing them.'

We stand at the door of the Customs. We exclaim, 'How much better they manage this at Ostend!' For there the baggage is examined without an instant's delay by a number of waiting officials; while here a solitary man informs you that he is coming to open the door 'in about 'alf an hour;' meanwhile you may cool your heels and grumble *à volonté*.

The search for 'cigars, perfumery, spirits' is over; we have none of these contraband articles. Our trunks are violently hurled on to a truck, the porter receiving our gratuity with a stoicism that wounds us to the quick. In Belgium or

in France the coin we offered would have made a *commissionnaire's* heart glad within him; a fearful doubt comes that it was contemptible in the eyes of the Briton.

We have secured rooms in Dover under the impression that we shall need a little time to renew our acquaintance with English ways and customs, before the actual 'settling down.' For that purpose, it is as good a place as any other. The sight of Calais on a fine day will be cheering; the coming and going of the Ostend boat will be somewhat like the coming and going of a friend; we are not, after all, so very far away from familiar faces and places.

The smart, white-capped maid shows us into what she calls 'the drowsing-room;' a well-dressed, florid matron comes to us. Our English appears to puzzle her as much as her English puzzles us; but we shall get used to each other. Our bedrooms look clean and comfortable, yet how strange! Tea is served; a substantial meal, as our landlady expresses a conviction that after a 'bit of a toss' we must be greatly in need of food. As a matter of fact we are not. We drink the tea appreciatively; we enjoy a slice of dry toast, because we have never had any since the days of *auld langsyne*; but we turn from the cold joint. To-morrow perhaps; not now!

We will go out; look around us, gaze into shop windows, try to like our surroundings. 'Great Bargains' hold us spell-bound; 'Clearance Sales' draw from us exclamations of surprise: surely everything must be cheaper than it was twenty years ago? Before the grocer's window, with its display of sugar, jams, marmalade, pickles, we stand in silent amaze. But we ask ourselves if the rules of English grammar have undergone a change since our day, and if spelling is not

exactly what it used to be? for a huge slab of cake is labelled 'Not to be *beat*: 4d. a pound,' and some unfamiliar sweetmeat is introduced as 'coker-nut bars.'

We have heard it said abroad that the English have a talent for advertising. We find that saying true; for the sounds of music float upon the breeze, and in our simplicity we take it to mean that one of the regimental bands is coming our way; we wait. A large open wagonette appears, drawn by three horses. Within it are seated six men with various instruments, and as they pause in their labours the driver reins in his steeds, and, rising to his feet, begins to tell of the wondrous bargains in ironmongery and hardware which, for the small price of sixpence per article, can be secured at a certain shop in the town. We walk on, and are conscious of the sound of a bugle. This must mean that the Highlanders are marching, or that there is firing from the fort. We are mistaken; it is only a man with air-balls, whirligigs, and other toys that children affect, which he declares himself willing to give in exchange for empty bottles and jam-pots, or to sell two for a halfpenny.

And talking of children suggests to us the remark that the manners of the rising generation do not seem to have changed for the better. Surely in our day they lived in their homes? whereas now they seem to live in the street when they are not at school, and to riot there as they may choose. We hazard the opinion that the continental police would reduce them speedily to order, greatly to the benefit of the public.

But there is an aspect of prosperity about the working classes which is good to see. No starving misery meets the eye in Dover; even the cats and dogs look well-fed and comfortable. Certainly a few street-songsters appear to desire alms. At this moment a woman is informing us in verse that she is 'all alone, that her friends are gone, that her only joy is her baby boy;' but she is neatly dressed in a black gown, jacket, and hat, while the long-legged girl who shrilly assists her with the melody is quite irreproachable in the matter of pinafore, shoes, and stockings. On our first Sunday, too, a comfortably-clad female indulges the inhabitants of the road with a hymn of many verses. But one halfpenny, so far as we can see, is the pecuniary result, and we are not able to feel any commiseration for her. She does not look in any desperate need.

The Sunday afternoon proves convincingly that the female mind appreciates the military man. Every soldier who passes by our window—and they are many—has a girl on his arm, a glow of satisfaction expressed on her features. The civilians seem to be nowhere; they walk in twos and threes without any 'young lady' to enliven them. Tommy Atkins is in the ascendant; and, out of the different regiments stationed here, the Highlanders are most in favour. Fathers and

mothers straggling past with their unruly children dressed in Sunday best; a few parties of Saturday to Monday excursionists stroll along the sea-front—only a few, for the season is at its last gasp; but the soldiers preponderate.

We hear that the annual visitors do not leave until November; but this seems to be a landlady's legend spread abroad for the purpose of keeping up her summer prices, for each day reduces the number of sea-bathers, the invalids in bath-chairs, the nurses and perambulators, the children who paddle in the waves and fill their pails with salt water.

October is kind to us in giving us some hours of sunshine, even though the wind is cold at the beginning and end of each day; still, everything around us tells that winter is coming—our first winter in Old England after so many years of absence. Shall we like it? We are not sure. But we begin to feel some pleasure in being home again; and, packing up our belongings, we move inland, resolved to sigh no more for what we have left on the other side of the sea.

#### THE COMING OF CUPID.

SHE spoke no word at first; but, through her tresses,  
Look'd up to meet the light in Eden lit;  
Hid her hot face away from his caresses,  
Which, though they touch'd not yet, emblazon'd it!

All through her childhood's days she had been lonely;  
And when young girlhood met her, unawares,  
Her heart reserv'd its bitter sorrow; only  
'Some one to love me' crept into her prayers.

The leafless branches tapped: a robin twitter'd  
Its poor, half-frozen anthem in the snow;  
But, in the fading light, a circlelet glitter'd,  
And Paradise was shining in its glow!

The voice spoke now that said her face was dearest;  
The lips had come to comfort, and defend;  
The hero of her dreaming held her nearest,  
As he would vow to hold her to the end!

So, with the breath of God upon their faces,  
And in their hearts the promises of morn,  
They watch'd the old wrongs creep from empty places,  
The joyless years fall back—for love was born!

EDITH RUTTER.

#### \*. TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed 'To the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'
- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them in FULL.
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